



**OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR**  
**Rick Perry**

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News Release

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**Gov. Perry Announces Emerging Tech Fund Investment in Halsa Pharmaceuticals**

AUSTIN - Gov. Rick Perry today announced the state will invest \$250,000 through the Texas Emerging Technology Fund (TETF) in Halsa Pharmaceuticals, Inc., of Houston for the development and pilot manufacturing of a therapeutic drug treatment for obesity. Up to \$1 million total investment may be available to the company if it meets certain performance benchmarks.

"Obesity is a serious health epidemic affecting more than 10 million Texans," said Gov. Perry. "The development of effective obesity treatments, coupled with a healthy lifestyle, will not only save taxpayers billions in direct costs and lost productivity but will more importantly save lives."

In Texas, an estimated 10.1 million, or 62 percent, of adults are overweight or obese, costing the state \$10.5 billion in 2001. If current trends continue, it is estimated that 20 million, or 75 percent, of adult Texans will be overweight or obese by the year 2040, and the cost to the state could quadruple to \$39 billion.

"In our preliminary work, the candidate therapeutic has acted consistently in causing fat breakdown without showing adverse side effects," said Halsa CEO Phil Speros. "Preliminary results lead us to believe that a product using our technology will benefit the obese and morbidly obese without the gastrointestinal distress, blood pressure changes, or mood depression encountered with existing products."

Founded in 2000, Halsa Pharmaceuticals' initial business plan was developed in the MOOT CORP Program at the University of Texas McCombs School of Business. Halsa won the Texas MOOT CORP Competition and received a \$100,000 investment from the MOOT CORP Pontoon Fund. Since its establishment, the company has received significant support from BioHouston, an organization that fosters activities to spur life-science start-ups, and other private investors.

Halsa has achieved exclusive patent rights to a natural material that, when injected into an obese patient, causes immediate and substantial depletion of body fat with none of the adverse side effects that other weight loss formulas produce. The company is moving into the advanced testing stages of the product.

The Texas Emerging Technology Fund is a \$200 million initiative created by the Texas Legislature in 2005 at the governor's request and was reauthorized in 2007. A 17-member advisory committee of high-tech leaders, entrepreneurs and research experts reviews potential TETF projects and recommends funding allocations to the Governor, Lieutenant Governor and Speaker of the House. To date, the TETF has allocated \$86.9 million in funds to Texas companies and universities. For more information on the TETF, please visit [www.emergingtechfund.com](http://www.emergingtechfund.com).

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